



Commonly Used Legislative Lingo

Appropriation: The money allocated if a bill becomes law.

Bill: A proposal to establish a new law, or to change, clarify or repeal an existing law.

Bipartisanship: agreement or cooperation of between political parties

Budget: The amount of money that is available for, required for, or assigned to a particular purpose.

Congressional District: One of 13 districts in New Jersey from which a representative is elected. The districts are established by state law and are redrawn following a census to maintain an equal population in each district.

Constituent: A resident of a legislator's district.

Fiscal Year (FY): An accounting period of 12 months. In New Jersey State government, this period runs from July 1 to June 30. The Federal government's fiscal year is the period of October 1 to September 30.

Floor: The area of the legislative chamber occupied by the members and staff of the house. A legislator "has the floor" when he or she has been granted permission by the presiding officer to address the house.

Legislative District: One of the forty areas in New Jersey from which one senator and two General Assembly members are elected. Districts, many of which cross county lines, are established by a special Apportionment Commission and are equal in population.

Legislative Information and Bill Room (LIBR): A unit under the Director of Public Information of the Office of Legislative Services that supplies a variety of information about the Legislature to legislators and the public.

Legislative Session: The formal two-year term for each New Jersey Legislature. The term is divided into two annual sessions. (See *SESSION YEAR*) Scheduled voting meetings of either house are also called legislative sessions. Voting sessions (meeting days) of the New Jersey Legislature are usually held on Mondays and/or Thursdays.

Legislature: A body of elected persons that have the authority to make and revise laws, approve certain executive nominations, and propose constitutional changes.

Line-item Veto: Applying only to bills containing an appropriation. This veto action allows the Governor to approve the bill, but reduce or eliminate money appropriated for specific items.

Lobbyist: A person who communicates with the Legislature and the Governor to support or oppose legislation. Officially, a lobbyist is called a legislative agent.

Majority, Minority: These terms refer to the political party having the most (majority) or fewest (minority) representatives in either house.

Majority Leader: The floor leader of the majority party in each house, elected by the members of the majority party.

Minority Leader: The floor leader of the minority party in each house, elected by the members of the minority party.

Party Conference: A meeting of party members from one house of the Legislature to discuss legislative business. Also called a *caucus*.

President of the Senate: Elected by members of the Senate, the legislator appoints committee chairs and members of committees and commissions, refers bills and resolutions to reference committees, sets the agenda for session days, and supervises the administration of the day-to-day business of the Senate.

Prime Sponsor: The legislator whose name appears first among the sponsors of a bill or resolution. The prime sponsor has the right to select co-sponsors and may exercise a number of other prerogatives in regard to the proposed legislation.

Redistricting: The redrawing of congressional districts, usually following a new census, to maintain an equal population in each district.

Resolution: An action of the Legislature that expresses the policies, sentiment, opinions or direction of one or both houses. Types include joint, concurrent, ceremonial, and one-house resolutions.

Senate: In New Jersey, the Senate has 40 members - 1 elected from each legislative district - and is presided over by the President of the Senate.

Session Year: New Jersey's session year begins on the second Tuesday of each January. All business conducted during the first year of the two-year legislative session may be continued into the second year, but unfinished business expires at the end of the second year.

Speaker of the General Assembly: A member of the General Assembly who is elected by the members of the house to serve as the chief presiding officer during sessions. They appoint committee chairs, members of committees and commissions, refer bills and resolutions to reference committees, sets the agenda for session days, and supervises the administration of the day-to-day business of the General Assembly.

State House: New Jersey's capitol building, located on State Street in the City of Trenton, which is the official location of the State government. It houses both the executive (Governor's offices) and legislative branches (Senate and General Assembly chambers and offices).

State House Annex: The building adjacent to the State House. It houses the Office of Legislative Services, legislative offices and committee rooms.

The Other Side of the Aisle: During debate, a legislator's way of referring to members of the "other" political party. The phrase pertains to the custom of seating all Democrats in one area of the legislative chamber and Republicans in another.

Veto: An official action of the Governor to nullify legislative action. Forms include absolute veto, conditional veto, line item veto and pocket veto.